



## Common Breastfeeding Worries and Problems

**Many mums worry that their babies are not getting enough milk. Signs that breastfeeding is going well include:**

- Your baby has a large mouthful of breast.
- Your baby's chin is touching your breast.
- Breastfeeding doesn't hurt.
- You can see the dark skin around your nipple - you should see more dark skin above your baby's top lip than below their bottom lip.
- Your baby's cheeks stay rounded during sucking.
- Your baby takes rhythmic, long sucks and swallows. It's normal for your baby to pause sometimes.
- Your baby finishes the feed and comes off your breast on their own.
- Your breasts and nipples should not feel sore.

**More information on Page 2**

**You can look out for the following signs that show your baby is getting enough milk for their needs:**

- Your baby will be content and satisfied after most feeds.
- Your baby should gain weight after their first 2 weeks.
- Your baby should be happy and alert when they're awake.
- In the first 48 hours, your baby is likely only to have 2 to 3 wet nappies - from day 5 onwards, wet nappies should start to become more frequent, with at least 6 wet nappies a day.

**For additional fact sheets see [www.ihv.org.uk](http://www.ihv.org.uk)**

The information in this fact sheet was updated on 10.5.15. © Institute of Health Visiting 2014

Supported by NHS



The Start4Life Information Service for Parents provides free information and advice. Find out more at: [bit.ly/1iC4rrO](http://bit.ly/1iC4rrO)

## Common Breastfeeding Worries and Problems

### Managing painful breasts

Some minor pain in the early few days of breastfeeding is common and usually due to your baby learning how to latch correctly. However, experiencing pain longer than the first few days is not normal so ask for help and support as soon as possible. The majority of all breastfeeding problems are due to the baby's feeding position; if your baby's position and the way they attach to the breast is not correct then you could experience sore or cracked nipples. The following may help:

- Ask a skilled supporter to watch a feed and help baby attach effectively.
- Squeeze out a drop or 2 of your milk at the end of a feed and gently rub it into your skin.
- Let your nipples dry before getting dressed again.
- Change your breast pads at each feed (use pads without a plastic backing).
- Don't use soap as it dries out your skin.
- Wear a cotton bra and use breast shells that hold your nipple away from the bra.
- Treat any cracks or bleeding with a thin smear of white soft paraffin or purified lanolin.
- Use soft paraffin or lanolin JUST on the crack and not on the whole nipple to prevent a scab forming.
- Continue feeding. With the right help you should find breastfeeding becomes comfortable.

An over-supply of milk can build up if your baby is not attached properly. If your baby does not empty your breast of milk, your sore breast could then develop into a blocked duct, which could then lead onto mastitis. The following may help:

- Check and improve the attachment of your baby at the breast – ask your Health Visitor for help.

- Feed your baby more often.
- Let your baby feed on the tender breast first.
- If your breasts are still full after a feed or your baby can't feed, hand express some milk to relieve the fullness.
- Warmth on your breast before a feed can help the milk flow and make you more comfortable. Try warm flannels or a bath or shower.
- While you are feeding, gently stroke the lumpy or tender area towards your nipple with your fingers.
- Get as much rest as possible. Go to bed if you can.
- Try a painkiller such as Paracetamol or Ibuprofen.
- Mastitis (Infection in the breast) may also be a sign of infection. If there is no improvement within 12-24 hours, or you start to feel worse, contact your GP as you may need a course of antibiotics to clear the infection.
- Stopping breastfeeding altogether will make your symptoms worse so if you're struggling with any aspect of breastfeeding, get help from your Health Visitor or GP as soon as possible.
- Some women buy pumps so they can give their baby their milk from a bottle, maybe because they need to return to work or study, or so their partner can get involved with feeding. Ask your Health Visitor or Midwife to show you how to hand express first. This is much gentler for you and will give you more information about your own breasts before you start to use a hand or electric pump. Once you have got the hang of extracting milk by hand then you will find using a pump is more successful.

**More information on Page 3**

**For additional fact sheets see [www.ihv.org.uk](http://www.ihv.org.uk)**

The information in this fact sheet was updated on 10.5.15. © Institute of Health Visiting 2014

Supported by NHS



The Start4Life Information Service for Parents provides free information and advice. Find out more at: [bit.ly/1iC4rrO](http://bit.ly/1iC4rrO)

## Common Breastfeeding Worries and Problems

### Sleep and breastfeeding:

- Many mums struggle with the lack of sleep in the early days of breastfeeding. Newborn babies have very little tummies that empty and need filling frequently - in fact, their tummies are the size of a marble at first and then only the size of a large strawberry a few weeks after birth. Which goes some way to explaining their need for frequent feeds through the day and night; of course, this can be very tiring for a new mum! But try and remember that before they were born, you were feeding your baby 24/7 via your placenta (Afterbirth), and it takes a while for babies to adjust to feeding less than that.
- Remember that your milk is tailored for your baby's maturity, and eventually you will fall into a pattern.
- Breastfeeding hormones help you get back to sleep more quickly, which is reassuring to know, especially if you are caring for your baby at night on your own.
- If you're really finding it hard to cope with night feeds, have a chat with your Health Visitor. You can also download a helpful leaflet from UNICEF's Baby Friendly website here: [bit.ly/1t6puH](http://bit.ly/1t6puH)

### Returning to work

- If you're going back to work or to study and are worried you won't be able to continue breastfeeding remember that any breast milk your baby has had already will have a positive effect, and now that your milk supply is established you will be able to continue to feed when you are your baby are together and express milk for when you are at work or college
- You can find out about your rights at work if you want to continue breastfeeding here: [bit.ly/1JGx2p](http://bit.ly/1JGx2p)
- You may also like to read our separate fact sheet on thrush in the mouth for information on this issue that can cause problems for breastfeeding.

### More information:

Please be mindful that the tips on this fact sheet are not exhaustive of all the advice available.

For reliable, supportive advice on breastfeeding visit the UNICEF website:

[bit.ly/1nKs7i8](http://bit.ly/1nKs7i8)